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ABSTRACT

Many educators see school downsizing efforts as the linchpin of school restructuring. Several forms that school downsizing efforts are taking are explored, along with a discussion of the reasons for which small schools are being established. The types of subschools that are being launched (houses, mini-schools, schools-within-schools) are described. The largely exploratory study is derived from an extensive review of the literature and documentation, evaluation, and policy studies of 22 schools-within-schools and small schools conducted over the past 15 years. Experiences in three cities, New York (New York), Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), and Chicago (Illinois), are highlighted. The evidence suggests that there are multiple reasons for downsizing, notably the enhancement of commitment and performance and the development of teachers and students. A number of subunits, subschools, and small schools have been quite successful in achieving better attendance, more positive attitudes, and greater achievement. Schools that have been designed and operated as distinctive and autonomous entities have had a better chance of success. While downsizing is clearly no magic bullet, it can increase student participation, reduce dropouts, improve achievement, and enhance teacher efficacy. (Contains 2 figures and 136 references.) (SLD)

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Taking Stock: The Movement To Create Mini-Schools, Schools-Within-Schools, and Separate Small Schools

Mary Anne Raywid

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TAKING STOCK:
THE MOVEMENT TO CREATE MINI-SCHOOLS, SCHOOLS-WITHIN-SCHOOLS, AND SEPARATE SMALL SCHOOLS

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—Mary Anne Raywid

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INTRODUCTION

In the 30 years following the famed Barker & Gump study, *Big School, Small School* (1964), experience has steadily added support for the conclusion that small schools are preferable to the large ones attended by substantial numbers of the nation's adolescents and by some younger children as well. But such a conclusion poses problems: many of the schools built over the last 75 years and still in use were designed to accommodate enrollments of 2,000-4,000 or more. And even as current structures are supplemented or gradually replaced, some policy makers insist that small schools would be prohibitively expensive to build and maintain.

Moreover, there is little agreement on what "small" means. A compilation of the size recommendations of 13 studies of the 1970s and 1980s recommended maximum school enrollments of 2,000 (Public Education Association, 1992a), but many are now urging that they be capped at 1,000 (Oxley & McCabe, 1990). New York City's new small high schools will range in size from approximately 100 to 1,000 students. For Central Park East Secondary School, one of the small school pioneers, even its 450 student enrollment is considered too large for a single school; it has created three separate subunits to reduce unit size to 150. Yet despite the variation in specific numbers, there is widespread agreement that the scale of many of today's schools—especially those in urban centers and consolidated school districts—is far too large.

Not surprisingly, therefore, new ways are being sought to pursue the advantages of smallness by somehow downsizing or downscaling existing buildings. Thus, there are schools-within-schools and their variants, including house plans, mini-schools, learning communities, clusters, and "charters" like those adopted in Philadelphia's high schools. Yet at the same time, some observers have warned that schools-within-schools pose problems: the most extensive examination of them to date, that of Coalition of Essential Schools ethnographers Muncey and McQuillan (1991), concluded that they are divisive and likely to introduce contention.

This conclusion suggests that perhaps a somewhat modified or *partial* implementation of schools-within-schools might be the answer. The trouble with such a solution, it is already clear, is that the more partial or compromised the implementation, the slimmer the gain and the less likely that the benefits sought will be realized (McCabe & Oxley, 1989; McMullan, Sipe, & Wolf, 1994). These benefits are contingent upon the extent to which the downsized unit becomes a point of identification and affiliation for students and teachers. The challenge is shown vividly in Sarah Lawrence Lightfoot's portrait of Brookline High School. She contrasts the school's four houses with its school-within-a-school:

> They were designed to be like the houses of Harvard and Yale....They resemble the houses of Harvard only in a structural, bureaucratic sense...[A]t Brookline they are not intellectual frameworks, neither are they communities that inspire loyalty and commitment....[S]tudents I talked to...did not speak of the houses as places of connection and solace. Faculty, administrators, and students seem to agree that the houses...serve little more than an organizational function....Although counselors and homerooms are affiliated with houses and faculty have house assignments, teachers identify with the departments of which they are a part and see them as the primary educational settings. Says one housemaster..."Houses really have no identity....They are a superficial overlay..."
>
> * * *
>
> In contrast to the houses, which are experienced as partial communities, the School Within a School emerges as a real community that embraces the lives of its inhabitants....Tucked in a fourth-floor corner of the school, SWS has a dramatic identity....With a twelve-year history and a very stable faculty, SWS is firmly entrenched....[I]ts identity as a vital community, with a unique ethos and encompassing power still prevails.... (Lightfoot, 1983, pp.184-187)

In an effort to understand what makes the difference, this paper examines the several forms which school downsizing efforts are taking, along with the somewhat diverse purposes for which smaller schools are being established. It explores the various types of subschools that are being launched (houses, mini-schools, schools-within-schools) and it examines the benefits, liabilities, and challenges that have been linked to these various efforts.

Two kinds of inquiry undergird this largely exploratory study. One is an extensive review of the literature pertaining to house plans and schools-within-schools, as published over the last 35 years. The second major source of the claims, analyses, and speculations contained herein consists of documentations, evaluations, and policy studies of 22 schools-within-schools and small schools, which have been conducted over the past 15 years by this paper's author.

It should be noted at the outset that the downscaling idea is not a new one. The current variants of houses, mini-schools, and schools-within-schools have been discussed and recommended recurringly in the United States, ever since the first recorded adoption in 1919 at a Texas high school (Plath, 1965). They have long existed elsewhere, with houses being a part of the British private school tradition and 60-90 percent of England's comprehensive high schools having adopted house plans in the 1960s and 1970s (Dierenfield, 1975; "The House System in Comprehensive Schools in England and Wales," 1968).

But houses and schools-within-schools are being recommended today in new forms, and for new reasons, in the interests of meeting new challenges of considerable urgency. Many educators see them as the linchpin of restructuring. According to analyst Diana Oxley, the house plan is "a clear, obvious first step... toward restructuring" and "a prerequisite to other educational reforms" (1989, pp.52, 30). Moreover, it is "the most viable way to accomplish the radical changes that must be made" (Oxley & McCabe, 1990, p.v). The Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools cites the establishment of schools-within-schools as a manifestation of restructuring (Newmann, 1991). And in Philadelphia, where The Pew Charitable Trusts have made the establishment of subunits in comprehensive high schools the focus of their efforts, the conviction is that "the strategy for

pursuing fundamental restructuring within high schools...is through the creation of schools-within-a-school" (McMullan et al., 1994, p.3).

DOWNSIZING AS A SOLUTION

Today, the division of large schools into subschools or subunits is recommended as the answer to a number of problems. The array itself is informative. There is the size problem, of course, which over the years has been the central impetus for the subunit proposal, but the rationale for that has varied. Usually, ultimate purposes have pertained to better accommodating individual students and what the British have called their "pastoral needs": needs for attention, guidance, support (Dierenfield, 1975). But schools-within-schools have also been established primarily to increase administrative effectiveness and efficiency. In fact, the establishment of subunits within schools has at various times been undertaken in the interests of better administrative coordination and control (Hodgson, 1958; Prasch & Wampler, 1959), better disciplinary control (Plath, 1965), decreased vandalism, crime, and delinquency rates (Garbarino, 1978; Gottfredson, 1985), curriculum reorganization (Bowden, 1971; Oxley & McCabe, 1990), school governance change (Lewis, 1981; Oxley, 1994), teacher teaming (Bowden, 1971), and better advisement (Siskin, 1994). They have also been created in the interests of accommodating particular populations, ranging all the way from the most at-risk students (e.g., Kadel, 1994) to the most academically talented and accomplished (e.g., Lund, Smith, & Glennon, 1983).

Most typically, subunits have been advocated to make schools more responsive to individual students (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1954; Ramsey, Henson, & Hula, 1967; McLaughlin, Talbert, Kahne, & Powell, 1990; Oxley, 1994). The case for rendering them so has been considerably augmented since the downsizing recommendation launched in 1964 by the Barker and Gump study. Several of the most influential school studies of the 1980s elaborated on it, recommending the creation of small schools or the downsizing of large ones (Goodlad, 1984; Sizer, 1984; Boyer; 1983; Lipsitz, 1984). Substantial subsequent evaluation has verified the advantages,

recommending additional purposes to be served by the arrangement.

Experience has demonstrated that students are more satisfied (Lindsay, 1982; Burke, 1987), more academically productive (Lee & Smith, 1993; 1994; Lee, Smith, & Croninger, 1995), more likely to participate in school activities (Barker & Gump, 1964; Lindsay, 1982), better behaved (Gottfredson, 1985), and less likely to drop out (Pittman & Haughwout, 1987) in small schools than in large ones. The benefits of small schools are particularly pronounced with disadvantaged youngsters deemed to be at risk of failing or dropping out (Lee & Smith, 1993; 1994; 1995). Small schools thus appear particularly important for disadvantaged or marginal students (Oxley, 1989; Stockard & Mayberry, 1985; Lee & Smith, 1994; Lee et al., 1995). This means that smallness is strongly indicated for serving urban students, large percentages of whom fall into the at risk category by virtue of one characteristic or another, including family income, minority status, parents' education level (Levin, 1985; Wehlage, Rutter, & Turnbaugh, 1987) or the student's previous education history (Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack, & Rock, 1986; Hahn, 1987). Demographic trends indicate that, for the foreseeable future, increasing numbers of students in other sorts of locales, beyond the cities, will share these factors as well, suggesting that the small schools feature may become an increasingly relevant and attractive organizational option.

But if the case for small schools has been argued and substantiated, it is also clear that decades of commitment to the comprehensive high school and to school district consolidation have led away from small buildings. While it would be possible to design smaller schools in the future, and efforts have been undertaken to stimulate such a move (Architectural League, Public Education Association, & Princeton Architectural Press, 1992; Public Education Association, 1992a), urban space demands will continue to provide pressure for buildings that accommodate larger numbers. Further, the problem of what to do with the present supply of large school buildings remains. It is the need to adapt existing facilities to the recommended smaller environments that has fed the move to creating subunits. A separate major reason, then, for the current interest in downsizing is as a way to "make do" with the physical facilities that exist now. Even these large buildings, it is urged, can be adapted or renovated to accommodate multiple small units, often

with minimal physical alteration (Public Education Association, 1992a). Such a move makes it possible to reduce the *experienced* size of school, despite building size.

The division of large schools into subunits—or rather, the replacement of a large school with what are in effect subschools—has also been recommended for a somewhat different reason: as an answer to the question of what to do with failing schools. Urban areas in particular are plagued with schools that over an extended period consistently fail to perform adequately: student achievement levels remain low, attendance poor, graduation rates abysmal. New York State identifies the worst of such schools on a roster called "Schools Under Registration Review." The State's list currently contains 80 entries (Sengupta, 1995), many of which have been on it for a period of years. Efforts to improve the educational experiences of students in such schools have often met with failure (Grannis, 1992; Lipman, 1995). Even well-devised plans for restructuring them have fallen short of the transformations needed (Wehlage, Smith, & Lipman, 1992). Nor have the most dire measures consistently proven effective: for instance, the closing of a school for redesign (Raywid, 1996) or even the taking over of an entire district (MacFarquhar, 1995).

The possibility that replacing a failing school with multiple new, small, separate, autonomous units may be the best solution is currently under investigation in New York City. A plan there involves closing down failing schools altogether by phasing them out, and replacing them by moving in a set of separate, small schools. The first building to be so reconstituted is Julia Richman High School in Manhattan, which currently contains four separate high schools and eventually will add an infant-toddler day care center, a professional development institute, a transitional college program, and medical services (Ancess, 1995b). New York's Center for Collaborative Education, the New York City arm of the Coalition of Essential Schools, argues that this is the best solution to the challenge of what to do with ailing schools (Ancess, 1995b).

Relatedly, the Center for Collaborative Education (1992) maintains that the creation of small, autonomous schools may represent the model for how to go

about school restructuring, and the American Federation of Teachers suggested several years ago that small schools might stand as the model for reform (Shanker, 1988b). The Center goes farther, in suggesting that the very process of creating them may also model the ideal process for bringing about educational change. In other words, the small schools idea has value as process, as well as value as product. This reason for launching subunits, or small units, within a school is probably not a prevalent one today, and most schools and districts that create such units do so for other purposes. It may, however, become increasingly prominent in the future, as observers of school restructuring efforts reach the conclusion that restructuring a school is almost impossible: starting over holds far more promise (Darling-Hammond, 1995; Newmann, 1995; Wehlage & Smith, 1992).

The creation of subunits or multiple independent units within school buildings also results from an effort to achieve a number of the more specific purposes of today's school reform agenda. Some look to schools-within-schools or house plans as the means of personalizing education (Oxley & McCabe, 1990). Reformer Ted Sizer (1984) is just one of those emphasizing the necessity for teachers to know students well in order to be able to help them learn and grow. Personalization has become a prominent reform and restructuring theme for others as well (e.g., McLaughlin et al., 1990), and many have pointed out that downsized subunits like schools-within-schools or house plans are a good means of achieving it.

The same is true of another current reform theme, the emphasis on diffused roles for teachers. Such role expansion has been argued as a needed antidote to bureaucracy's fragmentation and the ensuing anonymity imposed on students, with the alienation which that in turn can bring (Newmann, 1981). Others have argued that narrow roles have negative effects on staff, resulting in estrangement or minimal commitment, as well as in a general deskilling of teachers (Apple, 1987). Small schools do not have such problems because they lack the enrollment to support specialized roles and functions. Thus, their teachers are typically expected to assume multiple roles in relation to students (e.g., advisor, advocate, home liaison), as well as in relation to the school (performing functions assumed in comprehensive high schools by deans, supervisors, librarians, curriculum and staff

developers). The broadened responsibilities, it is argued, elicit stronger affiliation, effort, and commitment on the part of both students and teachers (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993).

By virtue of the special advantages of small schools for at risk students, a number of initiatives have adopted house plans or schools-within-schools as a means of dropout prevention, and of helping previously marginal students to successfully complete school (Wehlage, Smith, & Lipman, 1992; Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko, & Fernandez, 1989). Such a purpose has been central in the creation of house plans and schools-within-schools or their equivalents in a number of urban schools (Oxley, 1990; Stone, 1989; Fine, 1994).

Others, concerned about the inequities of tracking, consider the establishment of subschools as a way to detrack (Fine, 1994). Some have proposed that by offering themes and an interdisciplinary curriculum, interest-based grouping can replace tracks based on presumed ability levels (Oxley, 1994). Students can be grouped by their own choice. This has been undertaken particularly at the middle school level where schools-within-schools are a frequent organizational feature (Burke, 1987). It is held that by altering approaches to curriculum and instruction, heterogeneous grouping can be made more acceptable and more viable.

Finally, some have established small units as a means of achieving a different sort of contemporary reform theme, that of teacher empowerment through a more diffused professional role (Meier, 1995). As teachers in small schools take on these diffuse roles and diverse functions—i.e., as they design instructional programs, and participate in elaborating a school theme, designing the schedule, setting disciplinary policy—they are in fact exercising the prerogatives associated with teacher empowerment. The context is one of assuming responsibility and getting the job done, rather than of exercising rights and privileges, but the result is that of teacher empowerment. This has been one of the explanations offered for the success of East Harlem's Community School District 4: that the small schools which teachers were invited to establish resulted in an extraordinary empowering of the teachers involved, casting them in novel and rewarding roles (Meier, 1995). It is not surprising, then, that some educators have turned to such an arrangement as

an effective means of empowering teachers.

Thus, there are a variety of reasons for which school people have created subschools, and a variety of goals they are seeking to realize through this kind of structure: downsizing large schools, meeting the needs of at-risk students, solving the problem of failing schools, modeling the process of school restructuring, personalizing education for all students, empowering teachers and extending their roles, preventing dropping out, and finding an equitable substitute for tracking.

Growing evidence of the superiority of a "communal" organizational form for schools, in preference to a bureaucratic one, may well prove a substantial additional stimulus to the establishment of subunits and small schools. Researchers have found that in schools rejecting a bureaucratic form of organization in favor of a "communal" or "organic" one achievement gains are not only enhanced but more equitably distributed, resulting from proportionately even greater gains by disadvantaged students (Lee & Smith, 1994). The finding that school restructuring of this sort—which can only thrive in smaller environments—is clearly linked to greater learning suggests that interest in schools-within-schools and small schools may grow. A recent investigation into which restructuring features had the strongest effects on student achievement and its distribution concluded this way:

> What might "good" high schools look like? A change that has strong support in our research is a move to smaller high schools. Without new bricks, mortar, bond issues, or millage increases, the most reasonable way to accomplish this would be to create schools within schools—smaller organizational units within the existing walls of most large high schools. (Lee et al., 1995, p.29)

EXPERIENCE IN THREE CITIES

New York City

In New York City, a policy adopted in 1987 mandated house plans for ninth graders in all comprehensive high schools. Although implementation was slow, some schools made plans for extending the mandated one-year arrangement to

cover all grades and continue throughout the students' high school years (McCabe & Oxley, 1989). The move toward house plans continued for several years, with varying degrees of implementation and attendant success (Oxley & McCabe, 1990). The policy has never been rescinded, but accompanying policy support has evidently never been sufficient (McCabe & Oxley, 1989), and appears to have waned with subsequent school administrations. Unfortunately for the plan, the Director of the High School Division who initiated it was gone even before implementation began.

But the downsizing idea received a considerable boost in 1992, when then-Chancellor Joseph Fernandez launched a small schools initiative consisting of plans that would yield almost 50 small new high schools. The plan was devised in collaboration with the Center for Collaborative Education and the Fund for New York City Public Education. The Center for Collaborative Education is the network of alternative school directors originally launched by Deborah Meier, which, as previously noted, has subsequently become the New York City arm of the Coalition of Essential Schools. The Fund for New York City Public Education is a philanthropic organization "which channels money into the school system from foundations and private contributors" (Berger, 1992, p.B5).

The Center for Collaborative Education was to sponsor and help create 12 new schools with the general orientation of the Coalition of Essential Schools. According to the plan, the 12 would eventually collectively take over the buildings housing two failing comprehensive high schools—hence the name "campus schools" was coined. The Fund for New York City Public Education was to sponsor another set of new New Visions schools, marked by varying orientations. Yet another group of small schools was to be developed under the auspices of the City's Division of High Schools.

The first of these schools, 32 of them, opened in September 1993. They differed considerably from one another, but all were small, they tended to be organized thematically, and reportedly all were moving toward cooperative governance and management (Office of Educational Research, 1994). As of June 1995, the new schools total had reached 48 ("Smaller, Better Schools," 1995). The

plans of the initial three sponsors have since been augmented by an Annenberg matching grant of $25 million, announced in 1994. The grant calls for the establishment of an additional 50 small schools, this time with four different sets of sponsors: the Center for Collaborative Education; the Fund for New York City Public Education; the Manhattan Institute's Center for Educational Innovation, whose staff consists primarily of administrators formerly associated with East Harlem's innovative Community School District 4; and the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), which is an advocacy group specializing in improving the circumstances of lower income neighborhoods (Celis, 1994). The venture as a whole is concerned not just with the creation of small schools but also with the systemic reform necessary to their sustenance. Plans call for the establishment of new, non-governmental arrangements for clustering schools, through networks and learning zones, for purposes of creating professional and other extra-governmental coordination and accountability mechanisms. However, New York has seen several chancellors (superintendents) come and go since the small schools initiative was launched in 1992. The successor of the sponsoring chancellor was supportive of the idea, though perhaps exhibiting somewhat less confidence in it than had its originator. The successor of the second chancellor may espouse a conception of system-level reform incompatible with networks and learning zones, but that remains to be seen.

Philadelphia

Downsizing efforts also began in Philadelphia in the late 1980s with a large grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts "for a massive overhaul of the curriculum and organization of city high schools" (Walton, 1991). The grant established "The Philadelphia Schools Collaborative," an independent organization created by the district and the teachers union to assist in the systemic reform or restructuring of secondary education. The Collaborative seeks nothing less than to transform "all elements of the educational process, including instruction, administration, and curriculum" (McMullan et al., 1994, p.1). It was to do so by overseeing the creation of schools-within-schools, or "charters" within Philadelphia's 22 comprehensive high schools (McMullan et al., 1994).

Fine (1994) defines the term "charters," as used in Philadelphia, to designate a particular type of small school with specific criteria for size, heterogeneity, and teacher-based decision-making. Choice of this term was influenced by Albert Shanker's urgings and the American Federation of Teachers' endorsement of both concept and label (Shanker, 1988a; 1988b). The goal of creating these charter schools is to improve student performance by changing both pedagogy and school organization. This was to be accomplished by school-based teams which would introduce the components—decision-making and governance arrangements, partnerships, etc. (McMullan & Wolf, 1991).

According to recent figures, 110 such charters have been created within the 22 large high schools, and 61 percent of Philadelphia's high school population is enrolled in charter programs. As was the case with New York's house plans, however, the extent of the implementation varies considerably from one charter to another. Some are extensively developed programs reflecting a great deal of separateness, autonomy, and distinctiveness. They have their own students, teachers, programs, and identities. Other charters, however, seem to exist largely in name only—i.e., they represent only partial assignments for their teachers, there is little by way of theme or special program, and their students, although officially part of a charter, take few of their courses within it (McMullan et al., 1994).

Philadelphia has encountered the problems of massive change efforts and met with resistance from multiple sources. From the outset, top school officials were involved and were party to the creation of the Collaborative which was to run the effort. The superintendent formally set the expectation that eventually all of the city's comprehensive high schools would be converted to charters, even though it was left to grassroots groups of teacher volunteers to begin implementation of the conversion. However, what the superintendent would not do was to impose the decision of setting aside some schools to consist entirely of charters. This made school-level resistance hard to overcome, and union objections to charters have been intense and continuing, with an insistence on job protections and transfer rights based on seniority (Schwartz, 1994). Furthermore, as the initial evaluation of the effort noted, the Collaborative could not manage to generate an environment supportive of the changes at district headquarters (McMullan & Wolf, 1991). Thus

those systemic reform hopes which addressed district-level change have not borne fruit. As evaluators summed it up, the Collaborative was, "by and large, unsuccessful in convincing particular administrative departments to modify or rethink policies, procedures and expectations in support of restructuring" (McMullan & Wolf, 1991, p.x).

Seven years after the effort began, a new superintendent reconfirmed the commitment, enthusiastically endorsed the downsizing idea, and in effect moved to have the district assume leadership of it, replacing the Collaborative, to assure top level support for radically decentralizing the system and giving teachers a strong voice in the local school councils established in downsized schools. But the superintendent's is apparently a standards-driven, systemic change vision of restructuring (Smith & O'Day, 1991), and some fear that even though vigorous leadership may spur currently lagging momentum, it could also transform and bureaucratize the effort, reversing its bottom-up reform thrust (Klonsky, 1995b).

Chicago

Chicago is a city where downsizing sentiment flourished and small schools were being launched even prior to the adoption of a formal district policy of support. As of 1995 there were perhaps 30-40 subunits and subschools in Chicago. Several high schools had one or two, several consisted entirely of multiple subschools, and one elementary school had been divided into eight academies. One high school was divided by the city's new Board of Trustees into four subschools after the Trustees identified it as a school needing remediation. Former Superintendent Argie Johnson had earlier gone so far as to convene a Small Schools Task Force empowered "to explore the systemic obstacles that Chicago's small schools have encountered and to develop recommendations about how the...[district and board]...could more effectively support and encourage the growth of small schools" (Azcoitia, 1995, p.1).

The June 1995 Task Force report strongly recommended a supportive districtwide policy, the establishment of a Small Schools Office, and the launching of a small schools initiative. Shortly before the Task Force report was due, Mayor

Richard Daley issued his own endorsement and call for small schools (Spielman, 1995). Just before school opening in the Fall, the newly named Board of Trustees adopted a resolution espousing small schools and establishing "a 'user-friendly' means of encouraging and fostering...[them]...and of assuring...[them]...support ...throughout the administrative structure" (Chicago School Reform Board of Trustees, quoted in Klonsky, forthcoming, p.85).

But well prior to such official support, a number of Chicago organizations had joined in the reform effort there, and it is such groups that have provided much of the stimulus for the development of small schools. A 1994 paper describing and recommending these schools was sponsored by 13 organizations, including the Chicago Urban League, the Business and Professional People for the Public Interest, Designs for Change, the Quest Center of the Chicago Teachers Union, the Chicago Panel on School Policy, and the Small Schools Workshop at the University of Illinois-Chicago (Alternative Schools Network, 1994). The U of I group has been supported by the MacArthur and Joyce Foundations, and has both extended help and encouragement to prospective small schools, and tried to broaden the support for such efforts. A $47 million Annenberg grant to Chicago is providing further impetus, with 100 small Challenge Schools promised. And a recently formed coalition is seeking to marshall a "movement" that will generate widespread support for small schools.

But until quite recently, progress in Chicago had occurred in the absence of any formal district approval or support. Thus the ability to establish subunits had been largely dependent upon the willingness of a principal, and a Local School Council, to let it happen—although several have managed to get started without such support, with one consisting of teachers who were driven out of their home schools and ultimately managed to find space elsewhere. While some of the schools-within-schools that have resulted have worked out "comfortable" arrangements with their host schools, "the limited independence most schools-within-schools have attained frequently constrains their ability to create the learning environment they seek" (Azcoitia, 1995, p.3). To the extent that the new Board of Trustees can make its wishes felt, such constraints should be lifting (Klonsky, 1995a).

Contrasting Policy Environments

Fairly different policy environments might be expected among the three examples. In New York there is official support for the launching, by volunteers, of new small schools. There is also interest and financial support from the philanthropic community. The new schools have encountered difficulties with middle level bureaucrats, particularly in their ability to meet in sufficient time the schools' needs for space, materials, and teacher and student assignments (Darling-Hammond, Ancess, McGregor, & Zuckerman, 1995). And it has occasionally seemed to some observers that the High School Division was more interested in replicating large schools on a smaller scale than in educational transformation. There have also been conflicts to deal with at various levels (Dillon, 1995b). But at least at top levels—superintendent and board—there has been sincere, often enthusiastic support, even when budget woes have restricted resource commitment.

Philadelphia is a different story, despite the district's official and explicit commitment to charters—re-named "learning communities"—as the mechanism of systemic reform. The city has mandated that all of its comprehensive high schools be converted to charters. In form, it is a topdown mandate demanding bottom-up reform. Prior to the policy's adoption in 1988 there were 30 existing "charter-like" programs, including magnet schools and career academies. As of Fall 1993, 80 subschools or -units had been launched over a five-year period. Partly in consequence of haste, at some schools there was insufficient opportunity for staff to self-select, or to design and implement programs, or there was not enough time to let students choose their charter. It seems safe to conclude that not all of the participants have been willing volunteers, and not all of those charged with administering the transition have been anxious to have it happen. Thus, it is not surprising that, as one observer commented about the governance changes, "the path...has been layered with ambivalence by the union, the district, and the high schools themselves" (Zane, 1994, p.132).

It would appear, then, that the stronger and more assertive policy support for downsizing in Philadelphia may have roused more concerted and effective

opposition than has been the reaction in New York. This seems to have been the case not just with staff in the high schools, but with teachers' unions as well. In New York, the union has taken quite a reform-oriented position in its willingness to exempt the new small schools, at least initially, from automatic teacher assignment processes (Darling-Hammond et al., 1995). In Philadelphia, the teachers' union has been less sanguine about having personnel decisions made at the school level, and indeed has been identified as "the most vocal critic of charters" (Klonsky, 1995b, p.9).

Chicago is a different story. There, a small schools "movement" appears to be still in the making. Policy advocates have stimulated considerable interest and positive disposition on the part of a large number of the civic, institutional, and philanthropic groups active in school reform, and school people. This finally culminated in a formal policy of support and encouragement for small schools. The care with which widespread support has been stimulated, and the time spent on cultivating it, may eventually produce the most positive policy environment of the three cities. Meanwhile, however, the growth of small schools there has been the slowest of the three.

SUBSCHOOL STRUCTURES

Identification

The terms "subunits" and "subschools" subsume the various sorts of downsizing arrangements now proliferating. The nomenclature is awkward—and significant—because the structures range in nature all the way from tentative, semi-units organizationally supplementing a high school's departments to totally separate schools which just happen to be located under the same roof. The former represent minimal additions to and departures from conventional comprehensive high school organizational arrangements; the latter, total organizational re-structuring. The various plans for downsizing seem to differ largely along a continuum, with house plans representing the least departure from conventional organizational structure, and separate small schools the most.

It should be noted, however, that there can be great variation within any single type, almost spanning the entire gamut. Thus, some house plan implementations represent few noticeable departures from conventional organization, while another school's implementation of the same plan may approach a full-scale, independent school-within-a-school (Oxley & McCabe, 1990). It should also be noted that the terminology distinguishing one type from another, as well as the practice, is highly idiosyncratic: for example, New York's distinction between mini-schools and schools-within-schools has probably not been formalized elsewhere, or, if it has, may elsewhere be identified in other terms. Philadelphia's charter schools are defined as schools-within-schools (McMullan & Wolf, 1991), yet some of them look like rather weakly implemented house plans (McMullan et al., 1994), while others appear as virtually autonomous subschools (Oxley, 1994).

In addition, and further confusing the identification of subschool types, some are identified primarily in programmatic terms, rather than in the organizationally-oriented terms that identify mini-schools and schools-within-schools. For instance, New York's alternative schools are virtually all quite literally schools-within-schools, since all but a very few are housed in large buildings with other schools, but in terms of their independence they are separate small schools. At least at the high school level, however, they are not identified as schools-within-schools, or small schools, but as alternatives. In New York, alternatives are defined formally in terms of a target group (students who have experienced prior difficulty in school, according to Phillips [1992]), but more frequently their innovative practices involving nontraditional curricula and instructional methods are used to define them (Raywid, 1995b). And in California, the Partnership Academies, which represent a somewhat different and fairly specific programmatic thrust, are sometimes equated with schools-within-schools since all of them are housed within larger school buildings (Dayton, 1987).

To further confuse matters, some schools have sought to accomplish purposes similar to those of house plans and schools-within-schools, by changing teacher assignments while leaving organizational structure intact. This seems to be the case with teacher teaming arrangements, some of which are created to solve problems similar to those that downsized schools are created to address (see e.g.,

Kruse & Louis, 1995). Various sorts of teacher teaming setups have resulted, including at least one which manages to span both structural and programmatic orientations with the designation "team-within-a-school" (Aschbacher, 1991). It is a curricular program titled Humanitas, conducted by a teacher team, but it seems to have some of the same features that define house plans.

To illustrate these overlaps, here are three conceptions of subunits and small schools. The Chicago Task Force characterized small schools this way: (1) They are small, preferably with enrollment limits of 300 for an elementary school and 500 for a high school. (2) They consist of like-minded teachers and families: "cohesive, self-selected faculties...[which]...share an educational philosophy" and families which choose this orientation. (3) They are sufficiently autonomous to control key curricular, budgetary, personnel, organizational, and student decisions. (4) They have an agreed-upon focus or theme. (5) Students choose to enroll, and the schools are inclusive rather than selective, including diverse groups and ability/achievement levels. (6) They are effective in preparing and graduating students, aided by a "personalized learning environment and flexibility" (Azcoitia, 1995, p.9).

Philadelphia's charters, according to Fine, who was instrumental in conceptualizing them, are schools-within-schools, with "quite specific criteria":

> Anywhere from 200 to 400 students constitute a charter, with 10 to 12 core teachers who work together from ninth (or tenth) grade through to graduation. The charter faculty enjoy a common preparation period daily, share responsibility for a cohort of students, and invent curriculum, pedagogies, and assessment strategies that reflect a common intellectual project. Students travel together to classes....With teachers, counselors, and parents, they constitute a semiautonomous community within a building of charters.... [T]he student body must be, by definition, heterogeneous. (Fine, 1994, p.5)

A third version, the conception of houses presented by the Public Education Association in New York, defined a fully implemented house plan to consist of cross-grade, heterogeneously grouped subunits, staffed by cross-disciplinary teacher teams, each of which develops its own coordinated curriculum in regularly scheduled sessions (Oxley & McCabe, 1990). Each house also has its own support

staff, its own space, and its own extracurricular activities. Houses also have their own operating budgets and are managed by their own staff.

The three conceptions make several things clear. First, despite the fact that they are defining presumably different phenomena—houses, charters, small schools—there are obviously some real connections among them. A similar vision with respect to school organization, size, personalization, teacher roles, student grouping, decentralized school governance seems to inspire the three.

On the other hand, the three are also diverse and reflect different emphases on core traits. For instance, of the three, only Fine's charter conception suggests anything about the nature of the rest of the building (totally comprised of charters), and only the Public Education Association builds extracurricular activities into a definition of a house. Of the three, only Chicago's Task Force mentions that each small school must have a focus. The differences are not as pronounced as may appear, however, because both the Public Education Association and the charter school authors supplement their defining characteristics with a number of other traits. For instance, student choice of house or charter is presupposed by both conceptions and stated elsewhere, even though not mentioned in their definitional statements as the Chicago Task Force does.

It can also be noted that all three statements fall into what Scheffler (1978) called *programmatic* definitions: They are not value-neutral or primarily empirically-oriented descriptions of how houses or small schools do operate, but how they should operate. The reason that such definitions are so widely used in education, as Scheffler noted, appears political: In New York, for example, once the house plan had been mandated, and its possibilities for school transformation perceived by the Public Education Association, an advocacy group (McCabe & Oxley, 1989), it made sense to conceptualize the budding arrangement in ways that might take it farthest and make it work best. Thus, each of the three conceptions outlined above assembles what each set of authors feels to be the traits central to success, and collectively these comprise the definition. As a result, none of the three portray what houses, charters, or small schools actually look like, but what the authors feel they *ought* to look like. Public Education Association authors Oxley and McCabe

(1990) report they could find not a single school for their study of the house arrangement in New York that had all of the key features identified as central to it.

Since the three definitional statements cited are fairly representative of others, albeit somewhat more careful and detailed, they illustrate the absence of standard terminology. In these statements, for instance, houses and small schools appear almost interchangeable: equally ambitious and extensive efforts with respect to what they include and the amount of autonomy they enjoy. Yet there are vast differences from one to another of members of each genre. Some within the genre look nothing like others (McMullan et al., 1994), while some within one genre show stronger kinship with members of the other (Oxley, 1993). And some appear vastly successful (Oxley, 1994) while others fail (Raywid, 1996).

When viewed in full context, it is also apparent that some of these conceptions are far more comprehensive than others. Of the three, the Chicago Task Force version is the leanest, limiting its conception to central organizational features. The Public Education Association conception, on the other hand, not only includes school program concerns, but also recommends particular features for curriculum (cross-disciplinary) and instruction (cohesive, coordinated). The result is a full proposal for school transformation, reflecting an array of the pedagogical ideas that reformers are currently urging, but all recommendations are cast as features of a house plan.

Despite the case that can be made for each of these programmatic elements, separating the organizational features from the particulars of the programmatic as much as possible may enable downsizing arrangements to better serve multiple schools and audiences. After all, there could certainly be houses, schools-within-schools, and small schools that are quite traditional with respect to their program and practice. When one focuses on organizational features, the most important practical differences among downsizing arrangements involve matters determining their separateness, autonomy, and distinctiveness. These are not the *only* important issues but they appear closely linked to, and perhaps generative of, other conditions that are pivotal. For instance, it has been shown that the existence of a strong, closely knit professional community among teachers is a major contributor to

school success. It is here assumed that it is in the course of acting collectively on their autonomy, and seeking to define and sustain the school's distinctiveness, that professional community will be forged. On the other hand, however, the status of the new subunit is likely to determine the nature of the interactions that create the professional community. Are teachers collectively responsible for the school and its students? Is the larger school (if there is one) the *host* school, or is it the *parent* school? The latter is likely to resolve the questions of separateness, autonomy, distinctiveness in rather minimal terms. The "parent" orientation is more consistent with house plans and mini-schools, the "host" orientation with schools-within-schools and small autonomous schools.

Models

Although it is questionable whether the problems about terminology can ultimately be resolved, the subunits established over the years reflect some important practical differences between the scope and ambitiousness of the downsizing efforts undertaken and the autonomy ceded such units. Based on this experience, four distinct types can be identified.

A *house plan* is an organizational arrangement assigning both students and teachers to groups called houses. Students take some to all of their coursework with their housemates and from the teachers assigned to the house. A house may be organized on a one-year or on a vertical, multi-year basis. The house plan is a form of internal organization which is typically overlaid upon the departmentalized structure characterizing most high schools. Usually it has no effect on program (curriculum and instruction). Houses may have separate extracurricular activities but they ordinarily share in the extracurricular program of the larger school.

A ***mini-school*** goes beyond a house plan in addressing curriculum and instruction, and it usually seeks to maintain a program different from that of the larger school, or of its co-schools if there are several in a single building. Accordingly, it may also have more separateness and autonomy than a house. It has its own students and teachers and is usually vertically organized. A mini-school has no separate status or authorization, however, and is dependent upon the school

principal for its existence, budget, and staff. Teacher affiliation may be by choice or assignment or some mix of the two. Student affiliation is usually by choice.

A ***school-within-a-school*** is a separate and autonomous unit formally authorized by the board of education and/or the superintendent. It plans and runs its own program, has its own staff and students, and receives its own separate budget. Although it must negotiate the use of common space (gymnasium, auditorium, playground) with a host school, and defer to the building principal on matters of safety and building operation, the school-within-a-school reports to a district official instead of the building principal. Both its teachers and students are affiliated with the school-within-a-school as a matter of choice. At the extreme, this model might more appropriately be called a school-within-a-building, as Debbie Meier has suggested, than a school-within-a-school, since there may be no more connection to the other programs within the building than is the case with the multiple tenants that rent office space in the same building. These are sets of schools housed in "multi-school sites" (Public Education Association, 1992b).

There is a question, however, about how frequently schools-within-schools can and do operate "at the extreme." It is rare unless a building holds more than one school-within-a-school, or it consists entirely of schools-within-schools (Fine, 1994). It may be that only a school-within-a-school shaped elsewhere and then simply assigned space in a given building can achieve such distance and autonomy. Put in different terms, it may be that the creation of an autonomous school-within-a-school through a *restructuring* process is far more difficult than is its creation anew as a newly-minted small school assigned available space. Otherwise, a school-within- a-school is a challenge to old relationships and interaction patterns, and such cultural change comes hard (Raywid, 1996).

The struggles of some schools-within-schools in claiming the autonomy that has formally been ceded them suggests that it may be important to identify a fourth ideal type. This type differs from other schools-within-a-school only in that its existence begins in a building new to its staff, one other than that to which some or all of its teachers were previously assigned. Thus, a ***small school***, or a school-within-a-building, is a school-within-a-school, which, as a new entity with

its own personnel, organization, and instructional program, has been assigned to a building which is new to its staff.

It must be emphasized that this terminology and these distinctions do not represent common usage. As previously suggested, there is no common usage. Sometimes the terms are otherwise defined and sometimes they are used interchangeably—as in "under a SWAS arrangement [schools] will divide the student body in a number of semi-autonomous units (or houses, or mini-schools..." (Burke, 1987, p.2), or "a mini school-within-a-school" (D'Amico & Adelman, 1986, p.13). By no means all of the works cited here employ the usage proposed here or mark these differences. Thus these four types draw distinctions thought to be of practical importance in designing arrangements, rather than embody linguistic distinctions widely currently observed. Probably most arrangements called schools-within-schools instead represent mini-schools, according to the terminology proposed here. Some of the struggles in Philadelphia have in effect been over whether charters will be mini-schools or even houses, or whether they will be schools-within-schools. New York is the only place that is launching small schools of the sort described here, although in effect they emerged in Toronto several decades ago as a result of surplus space (Raywid, 1990b).

As can be seen, the four types represent different degrees of separateness and autonomy. The selection of one type or another may reflect different degrees of commitment to change, as well as differing levels of departure sought—e.g., they may reflect a commitment to school improvement in preference to school transformation, or to reform instead of restructuring. The several types also reflect different levels of stability and likely durability—since a school-within-a-school is a formally established body authorized by a school board and thus has a stronger potential for surviving personnel changes (Kirst & Meister, 1985), while a mini-school is the creature of the principal and can be terminated with a change in principals or a shift in favor.

It must also be emphasized that these four are ideal types and that programs are likely only to approximate one or another of the four. House plans can vary from one-year programs (most typically the ninth grade with a transitional focus)

where students take most of their courses outside the house, all the way to multi-year units that stand as objects of strong affiliation for their students. This latter model is, however, less prevalent than its opposite, wherein instead of the distinct and entirely separate programs they *can* be, schools-within-schools become extensively under-implemented units departing minimally from the rest of the school. House plans usually operate under conditions and/or restrictions, in terms of both authorization and support, that bar them from program development, and hence from the generation of teacher consensus or close collegial interaction.

Moreover, the strength or weakness of a particular house plan or mini-school or school-within-a-school—i.e., its fidelity to its particular type—may well vary over the years with personnel changes. If teachers are replaced on a seniority entitlement basis (more likely in a house or mini-school plan than in a school-within-a-school), newly assigned teachers may turn out to be unsympathetic and minimal implementors. Similarly, the commitment of a new building principal may differ from that of his or her predecessor. And a new superintendent may either terminate or intensify a subunit policy.

The differences among the four types of downsized schools with regard to structure, organizational practice, and program—features typically associated with school restructuring (e.g., by Newmann, 1991 and Lee & Smith, 1994)—are summarized on Figure 1. The chart may be helpful in exhibiting some systematic differences among them, even though it may minimize the differences often observable between schools-within-schools and small schools, by making the former look more restructured than many have actually been permitted to become.

There is not enough evidence about these types to attempt quantification of the differences or ranking the importance of particular features. But the profiles of the several types of units shown on Figure 1 do suggest a progression among the four, marked by differing degrees of departure from conventional arrangements and practice, in the direction of the small school ideal.

Figure 1
SELECT RESTRUCTURING FEATURES IN TYPES OF DOWNSIZED UNITS

STRUCTURE

School Type	Student Choice	Teacher Choice	Full Teacher Assignment	Full Student Assignment	Hetero-geneous Units	Themed Units	Stable Units	Teacher Directors
Houses	no	uncertain	uncertain	probably no	uncertain	no	uncertain	no
Mini-Schools	yes	yes	yes	probably yes	probably yes	yes	yes	uncertain
Schools-Within-Schools	yes	yes	yes	yes	probably yes	yes	yes	yes
Small Schools	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICE

School Type	Staff Controls Curriculum	Staff Sets Budget	Staff Selects Staff	Regular Collegial Meetings	Diffused Staff Roles	Shift to Communal Organizatn.	Units Replace Departments	Teaching De-Privatized
Houses	no	no	no	no	probably no	probably no	no	no
Mini-Schools	uncertain	no	no	uncertain	probably yes	probably yes	yes	uncertain
Schools-Within-Schools	probably yes	probably yes	probably yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Small Schools	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

PROGRAM

School Type	Discernible Teaming	Cohesive Curriculum	Cross-Disciplinary Curriculum	Theme Suffuses Classes	Flexible Scheduling	Engagement Emphasis	Advisories Or "Family" Groups
Houses	no	no	no	no	no	uncertain	uncertain
Mini-Schools	probably yes	uncertain	yes	uncertain	uncertain	uncertain	yes
Schools-Within-Schools	yes	yes	yes	probably yes	yes	yes	yes
Small Schools	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

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OUTCOMES OF SCHOOL DOWNSIZING

The impacts of downsizing efforts will be examined in several areas. First, the effects of small schools on students will be considered. A review of the ability of these units to accomplish the structural and organizational reform of schools will follow; it will cover the extent to which downsizing creates separateness, autonomy, and distinctiveness—three qualities said to be of practical significance—and to which downsizing brings about the school transformation which is currently a major purpose for undertaking it.

It should be noted that any such analyses are limited by the nature and extent of the available evidence. There are a number of case studies and evaluations of individual house plans, mini-schools, and schools-within-schools (e.g., Corcoran, 1989 ; Fouts, 1994; Morriseau, 1975; Moffett, 1981; Neufeld, 1993; Robinson-Lewis, 1991; Greenleaf, 1995). There are relatively few inquiries involving substantial numbers of subunits in multiple schools, but there are some (e.g., Crain, Heebner, & Si, 1992; McCabe & Oxley, 1989; McMullan et al., 1994; Oxley & McCabe, 1990). Moreover, some of the studies offering quantitative and comparative analysis do not focus on the organizational structure of these subunits, but on something else—e.g., on the program of the schools-within-schools examined, as in the case of the several studies of California's Peninsula Academies (e.g., Dayton, 1987) and New York's career magnets (Crain et al., 1992) or on the alternative school nature of the programs investigated (Foley & McConnaughy, 1982), or on their magnet school status (Musumeci & Szczypkowski, 1991). Only one study could be located that made any attempt to separate the effects of structure from those of program in a subunit (Charters, Carlson, & Packard, 1986). Neither do most studies relevant to this monograph sufficiently permit fully distinguishing the several different types established above. These limitations restrict the conclusions that can be drawn about subunits or subschools, but some tendencies nevertheless appear evident.

Effects on Students

A school's ongoing activities can be divided into two sorts, instrumental

and expressive (Stockard & Mayberry, 1985). The instrumental activities directly address learning goals, while the expressive activities pertain to the school's socioemotional atmosphere and the responses and motivations which that generates. An overwhelming proportion of the studies examining subunit arrangements suggest that they enhance the school's expressive activities. These in turn have a positive effect on attendance rates, behavior, students' school continuation, their satisfaction with school, and sometimes on their self-esteem.

Thus, a number of studies of the subunit arrangement report favorable comparisons and/or improvements in attendance rates (Tompkins, 1988; Fouts, 1994; Corcoran, 1989; Aschbacher, 1991; Gordon, 1992)—sometimes "dramatic improvements" (McMullan et al., 1994; Ramsey et al., 1967). Many link lowered dropout rates to the downsized arrangement (D'Amico & Adelman, 1986; Dayton, 1987; Gordon, 1992). Reports of lowered suspension and disciplinary referral rates are also common (Fouts, 1994). The self-concepts of students in a downsized program appear to be more positive (Robinson-Lewis, 1991). Studies also report higher rates of student satisfaction with the subunits (Fouts, 1994; Gordon, 1992), and a stronger, more positive sense of affiliation with school (Greenleaf, 1995). Teacher response appears parallel, displaying more positive satisfactions and enhanced morale (Fouts, 1994; Robinson-Lewis, 1991).

There are, moreover, reports of attitude change that testify even more compellingly to the enhancement of a small school's general impact on students. The smaller school makes possible a communal organization in lieu of the formality and rigidities of bureaucratic organization, and fosters the development of community (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988; Bryk et al., 1993). These appear crucial contributors to stronger school influence on students (Grant, 1988). One investigator reports, for instance, that "creating real learning communities for young people...increased their social commitment to one another and to their teachers, thereby increasing their personal investments in school." She further reports that "embedding community...increased student investment and led to an emergence of civic thinking and civic commitment that moved beyond the learning community and beyond the walls of the school" (Greenleaf, 1995, p.46).

Until recently, the record on downsizing effects on the school's expressive activities and their consequences (attendance, behavior, etc.) has been clearer and stronger than the links to what Stockard and Mayberry (1985) called instrumental activities. There have been findings of enhanced performance among students in subschools and increased academic productivity on the part of such units (Crain et al., 1992). There have also been studies that show students in such units outperforming comparison groups in comprehensive high schools with respect to proportion passing and credits earned (McMullan et al., 1994; Crain et al., 1992), and showing youngsters surpassing their own prior performance after enrolling in small schools (Robinson-Lewis, 1991). But there has also been an occasional investigation showing no significant differences (Jokiel & Starkey, 1972), or moderate or mixed gains (Morriseau, 1975) and tradeoffs, as in the case of one investigator who found that attending a school-within-a-school didn't result in higher grades and "in fact, may have resulted in a slight decline. However... students did enhance their writing ability substantially" (Fouts, 1994, p.14).

In Philadelphia, however, in comparing charter students with students not enrolled in charters, investigators concluded:

> On all indicators, ninth-grade charter students outperform their non-chartered peers by a statistically significant amount....[They]...have higher attendance, higher rates of passing major subjects, are more likely to earn enough credits for advancement and were less likely to have dropped out during the school year...The differences between the two groups are quite substantial, ranging from 11 to 15 percentage points across nine distinct indicators of academic performance. (McMullan et al., 1994, p.37-38)

Yet such improvements in student performance are not an automatic consequence of attending a downsized school, and not all students develop ties to the school. In Philadelphia, it was reported that only 54 percent of the previous year's ninth graders returned the following year to their charter. Higher return rates for some of the longest established charters suggest, however, that the voluntary departures were more characteristic of the newer and only partially implemented schools, to which, in some cases, youngsters had simply been assigned with no choice (McMullan et al., 1994).

Evidence demonstrating that the more extensive the implementation the greater the benefits comes from studies of New York City's house plans (Oxley & McCabe, 1990) and career magnet schools. Arrangements where magnet students are separated, taking their classes only with fellow magnet students, tend to have lower entering dropout rates in the junior high-to-high school transition than do programs that fail to maintain separate classes for magnet students (Crain et al., 1992). This study also found that in the more extensively implemented programs, average readers improved their reading ability at more than double the rate of students enrolled in comprehensive high schools. The authors speculate that these benefits may be due to fuller curricular implementation rather than to organizational differences. But the evidence they present is equally supportive of structural differences as the explanation.

Even clearer evidence regarding the effects of fuller versus partial implementation comes from Philadelphia. Evaluators there pursued two sets of outcomes, using the number of classes a student takes within the program as a surrogate for the extent of charter implementation (McMullan & Wolf, 1991; McMullan et al., 1994). (The measure leaves it unclear whether in individual cases the problem of fewer than three classes in the charter is due to an insufficiently developed charter or to scheduling failures that assign students outside their charter. For purposes here, however, it makes no difference, since the result is less than full charter experience for the individual.) They found two quite different patterns for students who took as many as three of their courses within the charter and for those who did not.

> we...observed a persistent, *net* effect of charter participation on academic performance. Further, when we used a stricter definition of charter participation (taking three or more courses in the home charter) we found an even stronger *net* effect on student performance. (McMullan et al., 1994, p.49)

A study of New York's alternative schools suggests an explanation for the toll exacted by partial implementation of one sort: that which would focus solely on either structural or programmatic change. It does so by accounting for the success of the alternatives in terms of their wedding of organizational to programmatic factors:

> At the heart of the matter is the interrelationship between climate and academic programming...The strengths of the schools are their well-focused academic programs and their capacity to engage students and teachers in a dialogue that reaches beyond the formality and rigidity of roles into the reality of individual lives; in other words, to foster creative human relationships. (Foley & McConnaughy, 1982, p.ii; Foley & Crull, 1984, p.53)

These investigators further linked structure, climate, and program by identifying extended roles and diversified responsibilities for teachers, choice or voluntary affiliation for students, small school size, the collaborative development of curriculum by teachers, and flexibility as the more specific factors in determining success (Foley & Crull, 1984; Foley & McConnaughy, 1982). To the extent that they are correct in suggesting that it is the *combination* which is the explanation, successful school transformation is dependent on cultural change as well as structural, on organizational change as well as programmatic. Thus, partial implementation efforts—efforts that neglect any of these broad components—may severely compromise prospective impact.

Effects on Schools

But just how extensive must the implementation of both organizational and programmatic change be to improve student performance? How many of the features of houses or charters must be adopted in order to make success likely? The benefits sought by downsizing appear contingent upon the ability of new schools to establish a collective identity beyond that of a host school or other subschools: to project clear, identifiable boundaries and to display perceptible differences, palpable to students.

Organization

Such definitive separateness seems necessary to the conduct of expressive activities, or to maintaining a distinct and identifiable subschool climate and culture. For instance, in one large school, which had been divided into three extensively independent subschools, constant pressure from the principal for the acceptance of schoolwide behavioral expectations and the sharing of key ceremonies and rituals all but eliminated the distance from a host school requisite to a separate identity

(Raywid, 1996). "Separateness" is both literal and metaphoric. It is a matter of physical space: a group of contiguous rooms set off in some perceptible way from the rest of the building, e.g., by doors or location in their own wings of the building or on different floors. It is also a matter of "psychic distance," consisting of the freedom to pursue a set of values differing from those of the host school (be they related to projecting a corporate atmosphere, or in making the arts all-pervasive, or in emphasizing the obligation to serve one's fellow creatures). It is also the distance to establish a school climate (such as an interactional style) and a set of procedures (such as the scheduling of classes) which differ from those of the host school.

Autonomy is a matter of the authority to make at least some of the education decisions: goals, priorities, deployment of staff and other resources, the organization and presentation of the curriculum, student expectations, assessment of progress. No school's autonomy is total, of course, but unless subunits are granted some degree of freedom to determine how to manage themselves, they will find it almost impossible to establish a distinct identity. Under today's circumstances, the autonomy may have to be obtained from multiple levels and sources, e.g., in the form of waivers or exemptions from state curricular mandates and tests, from district regulations, from contract appointment procedures, and from building regularities.

Of particular importance is the locus of control of whatever autonomy is relegated to the building: Does it reside with the subunit? Is it divided somehow between host school and subunit? Or is it delegated at the pleasure of the principal? These represent three different levels of autonomy for the subschool or unit, those ordinarily distinguishing independent small schools from mini-schools or houses.

Distinctiveness

Separateness and autonomy appear necessary, though not sufficient, to produce distinctiveness by enabling the school to become the product of the teachers who operate it: their interests, talents and convictions; and their personally-devised efforts to respond to their particular student population. Without

real differences from one subschool to another, and their ensuing distinctiveness, these units will not become points of affiliation and identification on the part of students.

Yet distinctiveness is a quality which traditional schools have not sought and which remains foreign to many teachers. As a result, it is often elusive in subunits that teachers have been asked to create, and even in some of those created by volunteers (e.g., see Raywid, 1995a). They are often uncertain about how, and to what extent, schools might differ. Is it sufficient for establishing distinctiveness to adopt a particular reading program, or to move toward small group instruction and cooperative learning, or to adopt a curricular theme such as science or the humanities? Probably not. In the first place, distinctiveness must be a matter of *qualities* as well as *elements* so that a particular school style or personality is cultivated—such as the prominence of humor and/or the featuring of collaboration. Programmatically, subschool distinctiveness could be defeated if several of the downsized units in a building were to adopt a whole language orientation, or all to emphasize cooperative learning. It is not that each subschool or unit must have a full program that is totally unique and different from all others. That seems unlikely. And it is not that each aspect of a subunit's program has to be locally invented and home-grown. But unless each school personalizes itself in the sense that it clearly bears the stamp of its particular teachers, it is unlikely to attain the needed distinctiveness. This imprint can be reflected in the school's organizational structure, role assignments, customs, and celebrations, as well as in curricular organization and content, and instructional strategies.

To attract students and to promote a sense of affiliation, the units need to reflect the same sort of individuality and distinctiveness that people do. All human beings have essentially the same components, perhaps, but in different amounts, and they are differently assembled and prioritized, which is what makes one individual differ from another in appearance, personality, talents, and strengths. Distinctive schools represent similar totalities or unique assemblages of attributes.

The four types of downsized units described above differ in their degree of autonomy, separateness, and distinctiveness. Figure 2 shows some of these differences in relation to the particular components which yield these qualities, although here, again, the differences between small schools and many schools-within-schools may be greater than the chart would suggest.

Figure 2
SEPARATENESS, AUTONOMY, AND DISTINCTIVENESS COMPONENTS OF DOWNSIZED UNITS

School Type	Exclusive Assignment Of Students	Exclusive Assignment Of Teachers	Unit Vertically Organized	Stable Groups	Separate Contiguous Space	Cross-Disciplinary Teams
SEPARATENESS						
Houses	uncertain	probably no	uncertain	uncertain	no	no
Mini-Schools	yes	uncertain	uncertain	uncertain	yes	yes
Schools-Within-Schools	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Small Schools	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

School Type	Separate Schedule	Staff Sets Curriculum	Staff Sets Budget	Staff Chooses Staff	Teachers Set Collaborative Time
AUTONOMY					
Houses	no	no	no	no	no
Mini-Schools	no	uncertain	no	no	uncertain
Schools-Within-Schools	yes	yes	uncertain	probably yes	yes
Small Schools	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

School Type	Staff Set Theme	Theme Pervasiveness	Teacher Affiliatn. by Commitment	Student Affiliatn. by Choice	Flexible Scheduling	Advisories
DISTINCTIVENESS						
Houses	no	no	no	no	no	uncertain
Mini-Schools	yes	uncertain	yes	yes	uncertain	yes
Schools-Within-Schools	yes	uncertain	yes	yes	yes	yes
Small Schools	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

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Restructuring

Schools that have achieved the qualities of separateness, autonomy, and distinctiveness are likely to be restructured schools in the terms that Lee and Smith define them: they are likely to have "moved away from the bureaucratic toward a more organic form" and become "a more communally organized school" (1994, p.11). It is possible, of course, to try to replicate a full bureaucracy under downsized circumstances, but it becomes far more difficult to do, and thus bureaucracy is unlikely to thrive in subschools. It can also be asked whether downsizing is likely to achieve the rest of the restructuring agenda. The aims of school restructuring are, after all, more extensive than converting schools to communal organizations. According to the National Center on the Organization and Restructuring of Schools (Newmann, 1991), these aims, as set by restructurers, are: authentic student achievement; equity; empowerment; the establishment of communities of learning; reflective dialogue; and accountability. Is downsizing an effective strategy for pursuing such ends? There is positive related evidence, but it is far from conclusive.

As shown, there is evidence from both qualitative and quantitative research demonstrating that reducing school size can produce both direct and indirect effects. It makes a school's students more visible, more needed, and better known to the teaching staff. As noted above, it also makes possible a communal form of organization instead of a bureaucratic one, a change increasingly recognized as pivotal to school enhancement (Bryk et al., 1993; Lee & Smith, 1994). It appears, then, that downsizing efforts can have both intrinsic and instrumental value, whether or not they are the necessary prerequisites to other reforms as some have asserted (e.g., Oxley, 1989).

Failed Efforts

It is clear, however, that not all downsizing attempts have changed much. There have been instances of failure and of minimal gain. For example, one effort with disappointing returns was a school-within-a-school whose structure failed to reflect the concept sufficiently to claim the benefits associated with it (Raywid,

1990a). The program was targeted for at-risk students and given its own separate, well-defined space and student complement. But instead of pursuing extended teacher roles in the interests of fuller student-teacher relationships, a social worker was hired to meet with the students regularly. Further undermining the possibility of expanded adult/student relationships was the full-time assignment of only one teacher to the program, while the rest of the teachers assigned to the program taught just one course (with some departments even rotating the assignment among their members annually). Only one course reflected a cross-disciplinary organization of content or any other sort of instructional innovation. With such piecemeal and partial implementation of the school-within-a-school concept, there were minimal improvements in student performance and virtually no gains in authentic achievement, equity, empowerment, the establishment of a learning community, the stimulation of reflective dialogue, or accountability.

Another school, mentioned above, which never managed to become a restructured enterprise, was ambivalent about whether its three schools-within-schools would be essentially separate and autonomous as planned, or whether they were to be three programs operated by a single parent school (Raywid, 1996). A lot of energy on both sides went into a tug of war, and the struggle evidently exhausted the major actors. After two contentious years the directors of the two most promising schools-within-schools resigned, along with their core staff, and on the last day of the school year the principal resigned as well. In this case, although the design had been explicit in assigning responsibilities and prerogatives, administrators failed to follow it, and the schools-within-schools were denied control of their own operations at the same time that they were being pressed in various ways to remain an integral part of a unified school.

Perhaps the most extensively documented report of the failure of downsizing to change very much is the study of the Annie Casey Foundation's New Futures project (Wehlage, Smith, & Lipman, 1992; Lipman, 1995). The Foundation sought to improve the life chances of disadvantaged youth in four cities, in part through school transformation. In two of the four, efforts centered on a teaming or cluster arrangement employing the features typically associated with downsizing (e.g., clustering students and teachers, advisories, meeting time for

teachers). In the third city of the four, academies were adopted. But after three years, and despite these changes in school organization, evaluators found that restructuring had not even begun.

Instead, the changes had occurred as incremental supplements or add-ons to existing arrangements, rather than as replacements of them. Thus adult/student relationships did not change and remained negative. The reason restructuring had not occurred, the evaluators concluded, was that staff members failed to see it as necessary. They continued to assume that the problem lay with the students, and thus called for solutions to individual students' personal difficulties, rather than for changes in the school. Without the necessary changes in school culture, the environment made possible by the new structures could not develop. The schools simply never reached the point where "the dialogue for change broadened beyond the deficits and transgressions of individual students" (Zane, 1994, p.126). The new structures could provide the opportunities, but cultural change was necessary before they could be realized.

Results to Date

Although evidence to date is limited in extent and detail, it appears that many of the literature's "bad news" reports are associated with one or another of these three shortcomings: insufficient faithfulness to the small school concept, either in the design or implementation; insufficient autonomy and separateness of the subunit or -school; and the failure of cultural change to accompany structural change. On the other hand, where these three conditions have been met, the record is far more positive. The school's instrumental, as well as its expressive, activities are positively affected, and improved attendance, effort, and achievement have followed.

It is too soon for much evidence involving numbers. A first-year external evaluation of 12 of the initial batch of small schools growing out of New York's initiative concluded that they have managed to develop their own unique cultures; that their curricula were developing around a theme or focus; that they displayed a tendency toward collaborative school governance and administration; and that many

of them were working in unusual collaborations with organizations and agencies outside the school (Office of Educational Research, 1994). Given the definition of restructuring offered in the previous section, such findings would indicate that restructuring is the path these schools have chosen. They contrast sharply with the New Futures findings cited above where adoptions failed to add up to restructuring.

Fine's estimate as of 1994 was that transformation was still in process in most of Philadelphia's charters. "A few," she wrote, "perhaps 10% to 15%, are exceptional. Most are still mediocre..." (1994, p.13). Some of the outstanding examples have already been identified, as analysts describe Crossroads at Gratz High School, and William Penn High School's House of Masterminds in Philadelphia (Oxley, 1993; 1995), and COMETS at Harper High School in Chicago (Klonsky, forthcoming). In New York, studies of the Urban Academy (Ancess, 1995a; Raywid, 1994), and of International High School (Bush, 1993), suggest that these schools have accomplished a great deal of the restructuring agenda. One of the newer schools established as part of the small schools initiative, the School for the Physical City, also appears to reflect the defining themes and values (Mosle, 1995), as does Vanguard High School (Dillon, 1995a). This is without mentioning Central Park East Secondary School (CPESS), arguably by now the nation's most famous high school and certainly its most well-known small school. CPESS is not the only successful small school, but by virtue of its relatively senior status in the movement (dating from 1985), as well as its quality, it has been the most extensively documented and most often discussed of the new genre. There is considerable evidence in classroom materials distributed by the school, in analysts' descriptions, and in film, that restructuring has been accomplished there: teacher and student roles have been transformed and the two groups interact quite differently than in traditional schools; school governance is quite different, with teachers collectively deciding most central issues; all students are pursuing the same demanding curriculum; the daily schedule is different; the student assessment system is different; and teachers continually examine and modify their practice together.

While the negative examples confirm that downsizing does not guarantee concomitant restructuring, the successful cases demonstrate that obstacles to restructuring can be overcome, and perhaps more readily than in other schools. As

Lee and Smith concluded, "one discouraging finding is...restructuring...is quite rare in American secondary schools" (1994, p.26). Downsizing appears to be one potentially promising way of pursuing it. Partly in the wake of the Annenberg grants stimulating creation of small schools and requiring careful evaluation, developments in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and elsewhere should soon be yielding more explicit and extensive evidence on the restructuring potential and success requisites of these efforts.

CONCERNS ABOUT DOWNSIZING

As noted above, Coalition of Essential Schools researchers have been highly critical of schools-within-schools, finding them divisive and peace-threatening (Muncey & McQuillan, 1991). A report on one Coalition school identified several sources of organizational tension in the arrangement, asserting that it "*challenge[d] the status quo of the mainstream high school*," "*set up divisions between*...[SWAS]...*and mainstream teachers*," introduced "*practices...viewed... counter to those supported in the mainstream*," yielded "*allegations that* ...[SWAS] ...*teachers get favored treatment and undeserved visibility*," produced isolation of the SWAS faculty, and made it "*very difficult to schedule and staff the*...[SWAS] ... *program* ...*while meeting the needs of the mainstream program*" (Neufeld, 1993, p.72-80).

As the list suggests, the tensions are associated with a particular context: they presuppose the continuing co-existence of a mainstream program and of a single school-within-a school paralleling it. Should more schools-within-schools be permitted, or should the building be converted to multiple small schools instead of having a mainstream, it remains to be seen whether such difficulties would continue (or, for that matter, whether others might replace them).

The criticisms and reservations regarding downsizing that have emanated from the Coalition and other sources usually reduce to one or more of the following four: whether small schools are prohibitively expensive; whether subunits inevitably introduce conflict and dissension; whether they can resist grouping

students as to ability and achievement; and/or whether the idea doesn't challenge some of the lessons extrapolated from the Effective Schools movement.

Costs

There are two kinds of costs associated with the new small schools, or in fact, with the establishment of any new schools: start-up costs and operating costs. The small schools have a distinct advantage in relation to large ones with respect to start-up costs. Since they can fit into or take over existing structures, they may require only renovation expenditures rather than construction costs.

This is not to underestimate other sorts of start-up costs, however, which can be considerable for any substantial change effort. Louis and Miles have estimated that any existing school undertaking substantial change needs "an annual supplement of up to $100,000 to cover the expenses associated with planning, developing, training, monitoring, and evaluation," and with space, equipment, and/or materials (1990, p.243). The mean annual supplement expended by the five schools they studied in detail was $212,000 (with the total range extending from $7,000 to $539,000). None of the five that Louis and Miles studied, and whose experience undergirded their estimates, undertook the creation of subschools. Thus, the $100,000 recommended by these authors can be used as a rough basis for comparisons regarding the sustenance of substantial change efforts as opposed to start-up costs for new schools-within-schools. It would appear that the bill for the 11 new Coalition Campus Schools launched by the Center for Collaborative Education as a part of New York City's small schools initiative will be roughly commensurate with that figure. Robertson (1995) reported that the start-up costs for the 11 schools, including the costs for the planning year prior to opening, average a total of $500,000 per school. This would mean an average of $125,000 per year for the first three years plus the planning year, considerably lower than the annual $212,000 mean of the Louis and Miles schools making substantial change.

It is worth noting that in both sets of cases cited here—those studied by Louis and Miles, and the Coalition Campus Schools—a substantial portion of the start-up funds came from external sources, rather than from the local district. In the

case of the Coalition Campus Schools, more than half of each school's start-up monies came from grants (Robertson, 1995).

Standard operating costs beyond the start-up period are a separate matter. These are usually computed simply by dividing the total spent by the number of students enrolled to arrive at the cost per student. But as analysts point out, that may not be the most appropriate measure (Robertson, 1995; Garbarino, 1980). If cost-effectiveness judgments are based instead on the figure reached by dividing the dollars spent by the number of students who actually graduate, the results are entirely different. It seems a reasonable formula: not the number a high school attempts to educate, but the number with which it succeeds. With the adjusted base, comprehensive high school costs soar. A school that graduates only 50 per cent of its students—not uncommon in urban high schools—thereby doubles its costs per graduate. On such a basis, even with higher expenditures, small schools would prove far less expensive to operate than large ones.

However, evidence to date suggests that the small schools do not require higher expenditures. New York City's Public Education Association (PEA, 1992a, 1992b) has argued that not only are construction costs more affordable for small schools than for larger ones, but that lower operating costs render smaller schools more cost-effective. PEA has shown that instead of the long assumed "economies of scale" favoring large schools, they actually operate with penalties of scale. Comparing costs in small New York alternative schools with those of comprehensive high schools, the PEA analysis showed the proportion of resources needed in a large school for supervision, clerical support, and security that are simply unnecessary in small schools. It demonstrated that rather than a *proportionately* larger expenditure for such resources (let alone a proportionately smaller expenditure, as the argument for scale would have it), the large school created a disproportionate need for them. Given this, the costs added by small school administrative needs are minimal, and the administrative resources needed for 2,250 students could be handled for very little more in three separate schools of 750 each than in one for all 2,250.

The economies of small schools are seen to lie in their ability to allocate

resources differently. They need fewer supervisory personnel (and associated clerical support), and fewer specialized service staff such as guidance counselors, librarians, and aides. Thus, more of their funding can be targeted directly for teachers and classroom use. Moreover, the small schools can use staff more effectively, so that a teacher may spend a greater proportion of work time dealing directly with students than is possible in a large school, making the average amount of per-student teacher time available in the small school greater (Robertson, 1995).

To date, there have been few investigations providing more direct and extensive empirical evidence for the claim that small schools, including schools-within-schools, cost no more than large ones. There have been analytic studies, such as those of the Public Education Association (1992a; 1992b), adducing reasons why smaller units are less costly in principle than larger ones, and there have also been surveys of schools-within-schools where respondents reported that program operating expenses were equal to or less than those of the host school (e.g., Moffett, 1981). But a combination of differences in accounting procedures, restrictive disclosure policies, and the absence of illuminating measures have limited comparative costs studies undertaken to date.

Staff Relations

Another reservation expressed about schools-within-schools is that they create interpersonal difficulties within a school. There is no question that the new relationships and alignments entailed in the establishment of subunits serve to distance prior relationships and, to the extent that they succeed, replace old alignments. Moreover, the more numerous and intensive the new connections—as in schools-within-schools, rather than in house plans—the greater the interruption of previous associations. This is both an asset and a liability. It is, after all, what school restructuring is about: one of its most succinct definitions is the creation of "new rules, roles, and *relationships*" (Brandt, 1993, emphasis added). Having people interact within different groups and patterns is believed important to changing school culture. It is thought necessary to interrupting the regularities that defined the school prior to the change effort (Sarason, 1971). Thus, the establishment of new relationships is an important contribution to change.

But the generation of the new associations, and the attenuation of old ones, is frequently a cause of tension. In the elementary school it is typically the grade level connections that are loosened, since, if any subdivisions exist, grade level is the usual organizational pattern. At the secondary level it is usually departmental connections that are supplemented or replaced. Teachers in schools that have created subunits often express a sense of loss in this connection (Little, 1995; Raywid, 1995a). Moreover, where the subunits are strong enough to win student and teacher commitment, usually a primary intent of such efforts, concern for and commitment to the school as a whole is drained. Thus, the schools-within-schools arrangement sometimes prompts concern over the tension between an all-school identification and a subunit identification (Raywid, 1996). At the very least, diminished communication is to be expected, and that alone can yield tensions.

This concern is compounded by the fact that rivalries and competition for resources (teachers, space, funding) can appear among the subunits. The new subunits must also contend with the old, and they introduce new power relationships *vis-a-vis* the old, most notably with respect to departments, but also in relation to units representing categoricals and special functions. For example, what are the powers of department chairs over staff in a mini-school? And how does such a subschool relate to resource room or compensatory education programs and staff? By virtue of the new *roles* and *relationships* they introduce, the new units may also provoke contention between their leaders and the officials associated with the old.

As earlier suggested, Coalition of Essential Schools ethnographers have concluded that the school-within-a-school arrangement is divisive by nature (Muncey & McQuillan, 1991). It is not clear, however, that subschools would introduce sharper divisions and more isolation than have departments in the high school (Siskin, 1994; Hargreaves & Macmillan, 1995), or grade level organization in large elementary schools. It may be that the relative amicability among existing subunits is due not to their less contentious nature but rather to the fact that relative status and power have long since been established among them. Nevertheless, the Coalition warns, "*try to avoid using the SWAS entry point into change if at all possible*" (Muncey, 1994, p.169). Muncey and McQuillan identify five "central

tensions" evident in their case studies of Coalition schools-within-schools:

> ...allegations of favored treatment; isolation of SWAS faculty from larger school faculty; the perceived need to appear successful; the problematic nature of expansion due to a lack of consensus...and the problematic nature of expansion due to scheduling and space constraints. (1991, p.85-86)

Only the first three of these tensions are pertinent here, because the last two stem from circumstances unique to the Coalition: its use of schools-within-schools as a beginning and prospectively temporary arrangement, in the hope of eventually enrolling the entire school. Elsewhere, by contrast, the school-within-a-school plan is not projected as a temporary but as a standing arrangement wherein buildings will house multiple subschools.

The extent to which the Muncey and McQuillan (1991) conclusions, and those of other Coalition investigators, are unique to Coalition circumstances remains uncertain: in no case where the Coalition program has been introduced as a school-within-a-school has that been the permanent plan. In all cases, the subunit is functioning as a pilot, with the expectation that it will take over or become a model for the rest of the school. (Although the Coalition is clear about wanting consensual support for the alliance from a school's staff, a lot of teachers have had prior experience with imposed consensuses and mandates substituted in their stead. Thus, concerns that the small pilot will somehow take over the school, irrespective of faculty objections, are sometimes part of their response to Coalition schools-within-schools [Raywid & Baker, 1993].) In light of such prospects, and because pilots have often included all who were positively disposed to begin with, substantial negativism might be anticipated to develop outside the program. Given the interconnectedness of school operation, the Coalition pilot usually has some impact on the parent school—for example, on schedule, or the ability to offer electives (Raywid & Baker, 1993)—and it is not surprising that resentments grow. It remains uncertain, however, whether these negatives accrue largely from the pilot status of the school-within-a-school, or from its very existence, as Coalition researchers have tended to conclude. Still another possibility, as Fine (1994) insists, is that a single school-within-a-school is bound to raise difficulties that multiple such units would not.

Although schools-within-schools have elsewhere been proposed as a means of minimizing conflict among people who see education in very different ways, undoubtedly their introduction in a school is likely to generate conflict. Indeed, it is becoming apparent that it is unlikely that restructuring efforts of *any* sort can occur without conflict (Lieberman, 1995). As Lieberman, Darling-Hammond, and Zuckerman flatly assert, "Conflict is a necessary part of change." The reason, they explain, is that change efforts "allow (and to be successful, *require*) previously hidden problems, issues, and disagreements to surface" (1991, p.ix). Thus, as Glickman adds, "*the more an empowered school works collectively, the more individual differences and tensions among the staff members become obvious*" (1990, p.71). But even more traditional, less ambitious reform efforts, such as changes in state curricular requirements, also cause conflict and may even generate schisms in some high school departments (Talbert, 1995). So it may be that school improvement (i.e., change) and conflict avoidance are purposes that cannot both be served simultaneously.

Student Grouping

Some educators are wary that subschools will be used as a mechanism and rationale for perpetuating ability grouping and the exclusion of special needs students. The risk stems from the fact that any attempt to set up heterogeneously grouped subunits confronts existing special programs, specialized courses, and academic tracks (Oxley, 1993). Moreover, "differentiated educational programs pose the real danger that students will continue to be held to different standards, as is currently the case in different academic tracks and special needs programs" (Oxley, 1994, p.522). And if the subunits are to be autonomous and themed, then they will inevitably be differentiated. (And *unless* they are autonomous and themed, they are unlikely to fulfill the purposes to which such units are created: to become the locus of student and teacher identification in the interests of enhancing the commitment and performance of both.) Thus the challenge is how to differentiate without tracking.

Developments in both New York and Philadelphia attest to the risks and temptations involved. Oxley reports that after the house plan mandate, "dropout

prevention *programs* became, overnight, dropout prevention *houses*!" (1989, p.51). The lure is understandable, given the assumption that special treatments are necessary, and given the prohibition against co-mingling of funds as stipulated by many categorical programs. But it is not only categorical programs that perpetuate inequitable grouping arrangements. As earlier suggested, some adopt downsizing arrangements while maintaining previous ability and achievement grouping. New York's house plan arrangement, like others, was typically an overlay superimposed on a pre-existing departmental structure with tracked class assignments. Under such circumstances, the effect was to make even more pronounced the separation of students at different ability and performance levels.

Even when homogeneous grouping is rejected, themed schools-within-schools, an arrangement designed to fashion units with which students will identify, present another more subtle challenge. As Oxley reported, "if...a school subdivides into houses with themes of 'English,' 'Science,' 'Sports,' 'Performing Arts,' and 'Business,' the strongest students will troup toward the academic themes, and the weaker students to the others" (1989, p.51). Such a situation is not inevitable in establishing a theme or focus, however, and, if explicitly confronted, it can be prevented (Raywid, 1994).

Evaluators of Philadelphia's charters noted tendencies similar to those in New York, and its designer wrote in 1994, "[t]here are still some schools in which charters look a lot like tracks..." (Fine, 1994, p.18). There are several reasons. First, in Philadelphia pre-existing charter-like programs—career academies, magnet schools, special college prep programs (called "Motivation")—were simply converted to charters. Some of these had admission requirements screening out low-achievers. There was also a tendency to convert existing dropout programs to charters. And when they were not so converted, there was a tendency to exclude at-risk students altogether from the charter arrangement. The conversion plan explicitly recommended gradual change not starting with the most challenging students. But the effect was that "special education students, overage students and students repeating their current grade are less likely than students who do not share these risk factors to be assigned to charters at all..." (McMullan et al., 1994, p.26). At least in some cases the reasons apparently involved a desire to avoid tracked

charters and to quell the job retention fears of specialized teachers. While there are some who would find such a situation acceptable, at least on a transitional basis, others would remind them that it is just such students who most need the downsized arrangement.

Effective Schools Contraventions

A vaguer but perhaps equally strong set of reservations may stem from lessons learned from the "Effective Schools" literature of the last 25 years. A number of challenges have been raised in connection with this research and its applicability to the high school (e.g., Cuban, 1984; Purkey & Smith, 1982; Ralph & Fennessey, 1983), but irrespective of the validity of such criticisms, it would be difficult to deny the influence and impact of this literature. A number of educators have looked to it for guidance. The literature emphasizes at least two points that are challenged by the subunit and subschool plan (Cohen, 1987). The first is the emphasis on total school or building coherence and the second is the Effective Schools' stress on principal leadership.

In contrast, subunits, either houses or mini-schools, could impede school coherence. To the extent that houses or mini-schools succeed at becoming the point of identification for students and staff, they have introduced a psychic distancing from the parent school. They have set up a new and perhaps even a rival subculture. And if the units have separate instructional programs, it may be more difficult to sustain an all-school conception of achievement and other schoolwide expectations.

Such concerns are genuine, and any efforts to create subunits powerful enough to stimulate psychological identification are undoubtedly going to attenuate all-school ties and create tensions between subunit and schoolwide affinity. Moreover, the practices that would build one or the other will conflict. For instance, in one elementary school it became a major issue whether pupils would share recess with other youngsters of the same grade level, or with their school-within-a-school classmates. In a junior-senior high school with three schools-within-schools, there was a struggle over whether there should be three graduations or one.

Note, however, that such tension ceases when the school-within-a-school is acknowledged as a separate entity: one school among several within a building. Under this circumstance there are not competing loyalties and rival claims on the individual, and a "schoolwide" focus can be sustained—actually, multiple schoolwide foci—within a single building. Such an arrangement may generate tensions (over common space sharing, for example), but these will not be of the variety that concern Effective Schools advocates.

The second set of reservations that the schools-within-schools arrangement may pose for those guided by the Effective Schools literature pertains to the preservation of the role of the principal. House plans do not change the principal's role, but mini-schools and schools-within-schools do, and in several ways. Both expand teachers' roles and are consistent with a commitment to teacher empowerment. Teachers collectively assume responsibility for program design, scheduling, etc. Moreover, both arrangements are likely to have part-time teacher coordinators or directors who in effect assume the instructional leadership function which Effective Schools research assigns to the principal. Some principals with responsibility for mini-schools treat their coordinators as entry-level administrators to whom they have delegated responsibilities and assigned duties. Others view the schools as somewhat more autonomous teacher-led programs. There is more ambiguity in the mini-school leadership position than in the case of the school-within-a-school leader: the latter is a separate authority with powers and responsibilities assigned by the district. He or she functions independently of the principal and reports to an official outside the building. (Some New York City school buildings house both mini-schools and schools-within-schools, which the principal must deal with quite differently.)

It seems clear that in neither mini-schools nor schools-within-schools is the principal charged with the instructional leadership which Effective Schools advocates bestow. Some view this allocation of responsibility as more realistic, particularly in large schools, and more conducive to the actual occurrence of instructional leadership, which principals rarely assert in the comprehensive high school (Siskin, 1994). There is no question, however, that the principal's role is redefined by these downsizing arrangements and the direct leadership function

somewhat diminished. As teachers take over the direct or immediate leadership there is less need and less opportunity for principals to exert it. In a large building composed of several schools-within-schools, the principal's role must shift considerably: it falls somewhere between that of building and facilities manager and that of district or regional superintendent with responsibility for several schools. As English and Hill (1990) have suggested, the model shifts from instructional to entrepreneurial leader. Although the building manager role would permit the principal to function in one of the ways currently being recommended, as facilitator, and the superintendent role would consist of cross-school policy making, it is understandable for principals' associations and bargaining agents to be wary of such a change. Yet returning to Schlechty's succinct formulation of the nature of restructuring, "changing rules, *roles*, and relationships" (Brandt, 1993) is exactly what school transformation is about.

Other challenges will doubtless emerge as experience with subunits and subschools grows. Any arrangement, past or prospective, is likely to come with unwanted effects and it will be important to know what to anticipate and address. One emerging tension, for instance, may prove to be the conflict between providing extended teacher roles, which is fundamental to personalizing the experience of school for both staff and students, and providing sufficient expertise to deal effectively with what one evaluation called "the extremes of student behavior" (Office of Educational Research, 1994). Other prospective tensions and challenges are being brought to light by the growing literature on the current centrality of subject matter departments to the high school teacher's professional identification (Siskin, 1994; Siskin & Little, 1995). But at present, a number of the tensions identified, and the reservations expressed about school downsizing arrangements attach to the need, as Neufeld expressed it, for "supporting the traditional while initiating the new" (1993, p.74), i.e., for maintaining a mainstream while supporting one or more units operating outside it.

CONCLUSION

The evidence examined suggests that there are multiple reasons for

downsizing schools, currently most prominently to enhance the commitment, performance, and development of teachers and students. A number of subunits, subschools, and small schools have been quite successful in accomplishing the purposes of better attendance, more positive attitudes toward school, greater academic productivity, and enhanced satisfaction with school. Such success depends in large part on the extent to which the small schools concept has been adopted in principle and implemented. Those units designed and operated as separate, autonomous, distinctive entities have a much better chance than those which are not.

We have also seen enough of downsizing to acknowledge that it is not the fail-safe magic bullet which reform seekers continue to hope for. It cannot guarantee school transformation or marvelous teacher and student performance. Organizational restructuring cannot assure that instructional change will follow. It cannot even promise that the collective identity necessary to strong individual identification will emerge. As one disappointed teacher put it, "A house is not necessarily a home" (quoted in Talbert, 1995, p.35). Effective restructuring, in the first place, consists of changes difficult to accomplish. Restructuring, as opposed to creating a new small school, keeps teachers busy at two jobs simultaneously. They must operate the old system while initiating the new. To ask them to restructure their schools "is a bit like asking people to change a tire while driving the car. To make matters even more difficult, we're told that it's not enough to change one, all four need to be replaced, not to mention the steering mechanism, the suspension system, the fuel we use, and the interior design..." (Cook & Meier, 1990, p.1). But even that is not really all they have to contend with. Everything must be accomplished within an unstable context that also keeps changing:

> Furthermore, the passengers keep changing and some of them insist on the right to share the driving. And some seem to think they should be able to get out at a moment's notice, but the driver is ordered to keep going—stops are discouraged and speed is essential. Amidst all this, drivers are still expected to follow the rules of the road, although many are contradictory and almost all were written for the old model car the driver is supposed to be dismantling. Where is it going? No one seems quite sure although they are expected to get there right away. The driver appealed a few times to those in charge, but there's just been a change of command and no one is yet able to answer the call. (Cook & Meier, 1990, p.1)

The metaphor suggests the challenges that have led some to conclude that designing and launching a brand new school is preferable to trying to restructure an already existing one. A successful new small school may be easier and better assured than a new subunit in an existing school. Nevertheless, just as particular challenges have attached to previous school reform efforts, downsizing is likely to breed its own. This monograph has reported little of the daily frustrations confronting the teachers who have launched small schools: the elusiveness of stable, adequate space; the uncertainties of sufficient resources in a period of financial retrenchment; the concerns introduced by changing administrations. And undoubtedly, some of the problems are yet to surface. Others are already evident, including the demands that downsizing makes on teachers. One charter school teacher summed up her experience with the words, "It's put a smile on my lips and bags under my eyes" (quoted in Fine, 1994, p.8). It remains to be seen whether the job can be done without exacting heroic efforts, and how many people will reach the point of being willing and able to undertake it. It is not yet clear whether multiple small schools must fill a building in order to permit the downsizing arrangement to work, so that there is no regular or "host" school. Nor is it clear whether this arrangement will breed less conflict among the resulting neighbor units within a building than have other arrangements.

On the other hand, what is clear is that reducing the size of schools can increase student participation, reduce dropout rates, improve academic achievement, and enhance teacher efficacy. It is also apparent that downsizing stimulates the move toward personalized "communal" schools, which result in independent benefits with respect to enhancing student engagement and achievement. It seems similarly clear that under present conditions, school downsizing efforts may be necessary to restore the conditions human beings need in order to thrive: to function as engaged and committed agents in their own and others' education. Finally, it appears that downsizing may be necessary to schools' ability to effectively initiate the changes essential to improvement. While downsizing provides no guarantee that these other changes will follow, it may be a crucial step toward launching them.

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